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TESTIMONY SUBMITTED ON MY BEHALF TO THE PUBLIC HEARING OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT MARCH 12, 2010

SENATE BILL 338, Section 12, CONCERNING THE PROTECTION AND
MANAGEMENT OF PUBLICLY OWNED WOODLANDS.

I wish to go on record in support of this bill since it will give the State Forester the flexibility necessary to ensure that the State's public woodland resources are properly managed, more fully utilized and capable of contributing to private-sector job growth.

The bill would establish a Timber Harvesting Revolving Fund, a mechanism intended to help increase the pace of forest management activities on publicly owned forests. Studies show that an increase in forest management practices, including the sustainable harvest of wood products, will lead to job creation and enhanced economic activity.

I have worked as a private-sector forester in Connecticut for 30 years. Forest management activities generated by the work of a single professional forester lead to a chain of job creation that employs professional timber harvesters, log truck drivers, mill workers, mechanics, equipment retailers, repair shops and fuel distributors. This economic sector may be somewhat obscure to many CT citizens, but it is an important component of the State's economy that deserves more attention. As more and more private forestland is lost to residential development and sprawl, the role that publicly-owned forests play in this economy is significantly enhanced.

Increasing the pace of forest management on publicly-owned woodlands will also lead to improved environmental conditions. Managed forests grow at a more vigorous rate, making them more resilient to disease and insect infestation (e.g. Gypsy Moth). The sustainability of certain wildlife species is also dependent on the ability of foresters to maintain multiple age classes of forest growth and to regenerate some of the more important tree species for wildlife, especially the oaks, which currently dominate CT's forests.

I strongly support the passage of SB 388.

Daniel F. Donahue